RESTORATION REVIEW

THE NEW HUMANITY

The Holy Spirit revealed to Simeon that he should not die until he saw the Christ with his own eyes. In the temple the aged Simeon beheld the New Humanity, the most glorious sight ever seen by man. Simeon said: "Now, Lord, you have kept your promise, and you may let your servant go in peace, for with my own eyes I have seen your salvation."

(The drypoint is by Rembrandt.)

See *The New World*, page 189.

Volume 9, No. 10 **December, 1967**

Volume 9, No. 10 **Leroy Garrett, Editor** **December 1967**

"SIMPLE TRUSTING FAITH"

The other day a dear brother in Christ was telling me of a book he planned to write, with the above title, lifted from a hymn he sang as a boy in a rural congregation. We eagerly anticipate the proposed volume, and when it is published we will be ready to call it to the attention of our readers. So this little editorial can hardly be a review of that book, but that lovely, delicate phrase has penetrated into my soul so deeply that I just must write a few paragraphs about it.

Simple trusting faith—what a blessed thought that is! It seems especially precious to me just now, for I have been struggling with a congregational problem that had become too large for me to handle. It was frustrating. It worried me, giving me a gnawing feeling in the pit of my stomach. In my efforts to work out an answer in my own mind, I found myself relying on the machinations of men rather than placing trust in God's providence. That arresting phrase—*simple trusting faith*—absorbed my thoughts. Do I really trust in God's promises?, I asked myself. Do I really believe that He will do what He says He will do in our behalf when we place our confidence in Him?

It was this kind of simple trust that Isaiah urged upon Hezekiah as he confronted both his enemies and death. God said to the king through the prophet: "I have heard your prayer, I have seen your tears; behold, I will add fifteen years to your life. I will deliver you and this city out of the hand of the king of Assyria, and defend this city" (Isa. 38:5-6).

God sees our tears and hears our prayers, and we must believe that He will deliver us from evil like He promises. Isaiah uses some beautiful figures to describe simple trusting faith, such as: "I have hid you in the shadow of my hand" (51:16), "The God of Israel will be your rear guard" (52:12), "The Lord has bared his holy arm before the eyes of all the nations."

It is Isaiah who gives us "the song of trust" in chapter 26, in which he says: "Thou dost keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee, because he trusts in thee." He also says: "In quietness and in trust shall be your strength" (30:15).

A simple trusting faith is related to God's mighty acts in history. If one believes that it was through divine fiat that the universe came into being and that God is indeed the author of all that is, it gives life a purpose that nothing else can. The origin, mission and destiny of man becomes simpler than the philosophers and psychologists would have it. God selected the "demonstration of the Spirit" rather than "the wisdom of men" to save mankind, so that "your faith might not rest in the wisdom of men but in the power of God" (1 Cor. 2:4).

The faith of the primitive disciples was wonderfully simple and simply wonderful. It expressed itself in such chants as the one recorded in 1 Tim. 3:16, which is introduced with "Great indeed, we confess, is the mystery of our religion."

He was manifested in the flesh,
vindicated in the Spirit,
seen of angels,
preached among the nations,
believed on in the world,
taken up in glory.

The apostle calls such religion *great,* and its greatness lies in its simplicity, a *profound* simplicity to be sure, but still it is simple. It is simple in that it defies all logic and is offensive to pride and human wisdom. It is the child-like mind that accepts the great truths about the Christ. It is simple trusting faith. Such minds cried out a prayer in those primitive congregations that further reveals 'their simple trust: *Maranatha!* they prayed, perhaps as a chant, and it gave witness to their simple trust that their Lord would come again—"Come, Lord Jesus!".

A few years ago David Wilkerson, a young country preacher, tells the story in *The Cross and the Switch-blade* of how his life was changed when he switched two hours of TV for a season of prayer. It led him from his comfortable parish to the ghettoes of New York City where violence, murder, rape, homosexuality, and gang wars were the rule rather than the exception. He went to New York in simple trusting faith, and the story of his work there demonstrates what God can do with just one man who really believes in His providence.

The faith of Dave Wilkerson is what most of us would call *naive,* for he believed that God would lead him to a street address of a dope addict that needed him. His decision to go to New York was contingent upon selling his TV set, and he had it understood with the Lord that if He wanted him to sell it, it would sell within 30 minutes after his ad appeared in the paper, which would be by 12 o'clock noon. He sat with his wife, staring at the TV, wondering if he really wanted to do God's will, while the clock moved to 11:59 o'clock.

His wife began to chide him for restricting the Lord and for not really wanting to sell the set. Then the phone rang, and the caller bought the set on the spot, sight unseen.

The Cross and the Switchblade is filled with such stories. When he wanted a house that would be a refuge for teenage hoodlums, he needed $4,200 for the down payment. He solicited help from a group of concerned people, and their contribution totaled $4,400. He wondered why the Lord had provided the extra money until the next day he learned of unexpected charges of $200. Later when another payment was due on the house that was being used to minister to delinquents in the name of Christ, he and his friends were praying for the Lord to provide when a knock on the door brought word of a benefactor who wanted to help them—to the tune of the exact amount of money needed!

Yes, such a faith is naive and child-like, for it defies all logic and reason. Nothing is so unreasonable as for a man to offer his own son as a sacrifice as one would an ox, but Abraham did so, and he is called the father of the faithful. And there was more nonsense than logic to Noah's erection of the ark. How foolish it was to the world!

Think how sweet it is to the Lord for Him to look upon a humble and contrite heart that deeply trusts Him. Who knows but what Dave Wilkerson was the only man in all New York who really trusted in God to minister to the teenage gangs through him. Can we believe that God would fail such a man? No more than he would Abraham or Noah.

The pity is that simple trusting faith is a rare commodity. We place more confidence in a corner lot and fancy real estate than we do in the power of God. Congregations place greater trust in their financial resources, educated ministers, brotherhood connections, and "the system," than they do in the leading of the Lord.

Where is the congregation whose first concern is not its own welfare—its building program, its budget, its program? Where are our churches that are dedicated to alleviating the suffering of mankind, irrespective of strains it would place on their own comforts? Churches should be like Jesus, and Jesus came "not to be ministered to, but to minister." And he didn't minister to them in order to make Church of Christ members out of them! He involved himself in the human predicament because He loved men.

When a man resolves in simple trusting faith to give himself to others, to yield his life to the rule of Christ, God will bless that man with whatever equipment he needs to do the job.

"In all things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us" (Rom. 8:37).

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CHURCH OF CHRIST BUMPER STICKERS

A motley group of Church of Christ existentialists up New York way, who insist on printing their names with small letters, publish an obstreperous sheet called *An Uncertain Sound.* They are a sophisticated and resourceful lot, quoting Pasternak and Milton and creating poetry. They are also a voice for reform, and with their placards and beards they are adding color to the New Look among us. They are the kind who defy the powers that be and ignore conventional approaches by doing such unseemly things as to go out into the streets and into the slums to witness for Christ. Yes, *witness* for Christ, of all things. And they talk about "the leading of the Spirit" and "the relevance of Christ" and Other impossible things.

Well, they recently came out with a page of suggested bumper stickers for us Church of Christers, and I soon found myself in stitches as well as stickers as I made my way down the page, and when it was all over I figured that the laughter at ourselves was good for me. It may be good for you too. Here are a few of them, and I am taking the liberty to make a few comments along the way. Imagine these gracing your car bumper as you drive away from the church edifice on Sunday morning—or maybe holy Wednesday:

ONLY ONE-THIRD OF GOD IS DEAD

The New York lads may be right in reminding us that while we assure the world that God is not dead, and even flamboyantly challenging its advocates, we witness by our superficial faith that the Holy Spirit must be dead or at least retired on a pension.

IT WAS *NOT* FERMENTED!

So eager have we been to get all the externals right that we have impressed our more responsible youth that these are the substance of our religion.

WE TRY HARDER—WE'RE ONLY NUMBER 9

Are the fellows sniping at us with the ugly truth that our real interest is in building up our party? Would we be interested in winning one for the Lord if we knew he'd end up down at the First Christian?

DON'T DANCE—PARK

Do we have shoddy values and weak ethics because we have taught that the kingdom is food and drink? When our youth will not dare dance but do park, it shows that we have failed and that "situation ethics" may be right after all.

FREEDOM NOW—FOR NASHVILLE CHRISTIAN INSTITUTE

These fellows know what is going on, and they have tongue in cheek when we talk about how free we are. They say the enemy is the church politician. If we discriminate against the Negro, and we do, we are neither apostolic nor catholic.

LIPSCOMB HAS 23% FEWER SPIRITUALISTS

These guys have been to our colleges, but obviously they were not brainwashed. They know that if a professor (or student) dares to be different, even to being a true Christ-man instead of a loyal party-man, that he is, in the lingo of dentistry, something like a cavity in a tooth that has to be changed or out it goes.

ATTEND THE CHURCH OF MY CHOICE

Ouida and I kept roaring over this one. Wow, does it hit hard! Isn't this what we *really* believe. Of course we say *the Lord's church*, but of course that's we—and only we.

SUPPORT LAW ENFORCEMENT—PAY YOUR PREACHER WELL

This is brilliant satire. It says more than a sermon on grace would, which of course we're not likely to hear anyway.

I. R. WILSON FOR POPE

It isn't that they are after brother Wilson, for it could be a dozen or so other names. They are telling us that we have our politicians and hierarchy too, despite our denials to the contrary. Through what might be called "Editorocracy" we have powers among us that can make or destroy any man or any new idea. But this may be changing.

THE FAMILY THAT ATTENDS WORSHIP TOGETHER

ATTENDS WORSHIP TOGETHER

This is my favorite, for it humorously attacks the old bromides that have gone unchallenged for so long. The truth is that a lot of "church going" amounts almost to nothing in terms of real Christianity. It will be better when we recapture the spirit of "the church in thy house" of the early Christians. Really, there is no particular virtue in a family attending worship together. It should be the natural expression of a 7-day a week religion. Let's face it: it is often the case with our very best families who are so loyal that they never miss a service—not even on Wednesday nights when the kids are tired and have homework—that they have accomplished only one thing. They attended worship together.

SEE WORLD'S LARGEST FOSSIL COLLECTION

—IN THE BIG TENT AT ACC LECTURESHIP

It isn't that they are down on ACC. It is another way of telling us that we are still a hundred years behind the times. These fellows are calling for relevance and meaning. They are tired of our answering questions that they aren't asking. They want us to get with it.

DON'T JOIN—

BE ADDED TO

We dilly-dally in making distinctions where there are none. Perhaps it helps to preserve our self-image of not being a denomination. The idea that other people become members of their churches by *joining* them, while we become members of the Church of Christ by *being added to*, is sheer nonsense.

FIGHT EGGHEADISM

—START YOUR NEIGHBORHOOD CHRISTIAN COLLEGE TODAY!

You'd think these fellows were dyed-in-the-wool Sommerites and downright anti-college. But they are products of the Church of Christ colleges!

Perhaps that is enough. You will notice that several of them gouge at our anti-intellectualism. Another reads: "Only You Can Prevent Higher Criticism."

The more there are of us who can laugh along together at this kind of fun the better it is for us. And I do believe that the boys in New York barely made it with this fun-poking device, for in a few more years we will have made such changes that the ribbing would be inappropriate.

Yet we want to commend these brothers for their perceptive analysis and for their imaginative way of provoking us to think. It reminds me of Socrates. I passed a few of these along to one of my classes at Texas Woman's University, where we have a lot of fundamentalists, Baptists as well as Church of Christ girls (you know, of course, that the Baptist Church is the state church of Texas.) They got a real bang out of "Don't Dance—Park." And no one had to knock them down to get them to see the point!

It is good for us when someone makes us laugh at ourselves. So let us thank God for these H. L. Menchens up New York way. Not only is there room at our warm side for beatniks, but a conviction that we badly need their brazen honesty. They help us to relax and see things as they really are, as painful as that may be. But what I like most of all is that they don't make us take these new pills dry. They give water with them.

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NEW FOR 1968

Beginning next month this journal enters its tenth year. The theme for Volume 10 will be *The Quest of God,* which will be a study of God's benevolent pursuit for the heart of man. Our thesis will be that God is "the Hound of Heaven" who is persistently in search of man, and that in one way or another each person at some point in life has a confrontation with God. God's quest of us involves, of course, the whole gamut of human experience, from Adam to Christ and from the dawn of civilization to the present. The quest is as old as Mesopotamia and as new as Tel Aviv.

Some of the possible subjects of the series are natural religion, the mission of philosophy, the Bible, revelation and inspiration, the nature of religion, the gospel. The series will run all year.

Another series for the year which will further explore our theme will be "God and Culture," the point being to show how God reveals Himself or exercise His will in all areas of human concern. My wife Ouida is joining me in these monthly visits we will be making to your house. We often read aloud to each other after retiring in the evening, and we have been continually impressed with the evidence of God's presence in the experiences of men from all walks of life whose stories sometimes get into print. We thus see God's hand in the world's great literature, and we want to share with you some of our conclusions.

Surely God's quest of man is in science, education, medicine, government, music, and all other areas of human concern. Indeed, *human* concerns are also the concerns of *God.* We believe that God has much to teach as we tune our ears to His voice in all of culture. Much of what we share with you will be from biographies of men who have made the world different. We are presently reading the story of a famous composer and the autobiography of a courageous U. S. diplomat. We plan also to read the biographies of Einstein and Freud, and perhaps Dag Hammarskjold of the United Nations, and still others from various fields. In all this reading Ouida and I will be asking ourselves: *In what way does God reveal Himself in the experiences of this man?* Or this question, which may not really be different: *What are the spiritual values to be gleaned from this person's life?*

Ouida is good at this kind of thing, perhaps because she is so good to start with. She wants me to do the actual writing in this series on "God and Culture," but I'll be passing along to you her insights. So we hope you'll pull up a chair and join us.

There will also be space for a lot of other articles and ideas from various writers. That veteran ace writer, Robert Meyers, will still be around, and we'll have that Ph.D. that wears the pseudonym. We will also continue to follow the policy of providing space for the fellows who have difficulty being heard through other means, and some of the younger fellows who often have something to say.

All of this will finally be placed in book form under the title *The Quest of God* and will sell for 3.00, as do the first two volumes, *Resources of Power* (1966) and *Things That Matter Most* (1967).

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BROTHER BALES' REVIEW

We have with this issue's installment of James D. Bales' analysis of *Voices of Concern* run a full year, all ten numbers without a single miss. To do this has required about one-third of our pages for the year, which of course has crowded out material that we would otherwise have published. We notice that it has effected our income also, for notices of books have been drastically reduced.

At the outset there was serious question as to whether a confrontation between brother Bales and the authors of *Voices* could be arranged. Editor Meyers cautioned me about expecting a positive response, for many of the writers had submitted their essays with considerable reluctance, and it was unlikely that they would care to follow-up with anything like a debate. We are pleased that while we did find reluctance we were able to get responses from everyone we called on with but one exception. We issued repeated pleas to this sister to reply to brother Bales' review of her piece, however indirectly, but she would not, insisting that I should pray for the man. Others yielded only when we insisted that they should-for the same reasons for which they first wrote.

Brother Bales has reviewed ten of the 16 essays. We have on hand his review of Milton Stolz's piece, along with Milton's reply, which we announced would be published this month. Since Roy Key had been invited first, we are publishing the Bales-Key exchange. It appeared Roy was not going to reply, so we urged Milton to get his in to us for this month. Roy's arrived in the meantime, so we have honored that priority. We are sorry we cannot run Bales' remaining reviews for which we have replies, Milton Stolz's and Robert Meyers', but we have reached the end of the year and we must stop.

One regret is that brother Bales never reviewed the essay by Norman Parks, which is surely one of the most perceptive of the articles. Even at our suggestion that he be sure to do so, he did not. We had Prof. Parks waiting in the wings, more eager for the foray perhaps than any of the other writers.

But brother Bales has done enough reviewing for now. We promised to go the year and we have. If we tried it longer, the law of maximum returns would effect us.

And we do want to commend Prof. Bales for his willingness to do this kind of thing. He wrote and wrote and wrote, which was a lot of work. He made many points that drew replies from the essayists. All this helps us to understand better. We thank him. And of

course we are grateful to all the essayists for their cooperation. We have all succeeded in a dialogue far too rare in our time.

We thought the spirit shown between brother Bales and his respondents was good. It is heartening that the essayists recognized brother Bales as a brother and treated him as such. While we regret that he did not once refer to any of them as brother, he was courteous and did not indulge in innuendo.

We hope you enjoyed it or got mad at it—or something.

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Things That Matter Most . . . No. 10

THE NEW WORLD

When anyone is united to Christ, there is a new world; the old order has gone, and a new order has already begun. (2 Cor. 5:17 NEB)

Can human nature be changed? Some psychologists insist that it cannot be, for man's drives, instincts and impulses move him in predetermined channels, so that no man can help being the way he is. This deterministic view is, of course, a denial of human freedom, which believes that man is at the mercy of his environment, that he can behave only in ways consistent to the ways he is conditioned to behave.

An interesting illustration of this kind of thinking is the research of B. F. Skinner, a Harvard psychologist who is known as a behaviorist. He contends that man is like the pigeons in his laboratory. Prof. Skinner has taught pigeons to play ping-pong, to dance, to distinguish between colors, and even to pilot a missile. This he does by what he calls *reinforcement,* which means rewarding the pigeon whenever he makes a move in the desired direction, all dependent on the pigeon's desire for food. Recently I showed a film on Skinner's experiments to a class of high school seniors, a very impressive and convincing film I must admit. When it was over one intelligent lad remarked: "Well, if I am like those pigeons . . ." and his voice fell as if to suggest that freedom would be no more than an illusion.

Oh, yes, man can be changed, Skinner would admit, just as pigeons or dogs can be transformed from peaceful to warring animals, but only by conditioning from without. Skinner contends that one can take babies and by a controlled environment make them into whatever kind of persons one wishes them to be. Change is not, therefore, a change of will and affection from within, but through a manipulation of forces from without.

To such a man as Skinner the spiritual experience of conversion can be explained only in psychological terms. Redemption can have no meaning except as may be realized through the improvement of social conditions. Transformation of character in any real sense would be but an illusion, for all such changes come about by a control of the person's environment. They are only passing experiences.

How remarkable it is, therefore, for Paul to speak to our generation of "the new world" that is in Christ.

Even Paul would agree with modern psychologists that absolute change of one's nature is impossible. Paul Tillich is right in saying that human nature could not change if there were not something unchangeable in it. Paul was aware that even as a new man in Christ he still had the old Adam within him. The experience of the new birth does not remove man's basic humanity: his needs, drives, fears, impulses. What Tillich calls his "centered self" never changes—or at least it is always present and must be dealt with. So Paul says of himself: "I do not even acknowledge my own actions as mine, for what I do is not what I want to do, but what I detest" (Rom. 7:15). He goes on to say, "Miserable creature that I am, who is there to rescue me out of this body doomed to death?"

He concludes by giving that great Christian response to the problem of being human: "God alone, through Jesus Christ our Lord! "Thanks be to God!"

The new world in Christ is not, then, a life free of human foibles. Man's essential nature does not change. Aggressive instincts, complexities and anxieties are ever present. Fears continue to haunt him even in Christ. The big difference—and it makes all the difference in the world, which indeed makes it *a new world* - is that now he has the strength of Christ. Thus we hear Paul saying, "For me to live is Christ. . . " (Philip. 1:21). Paul did not mean that he was any less human, or not even any less Paul, but that he had a Person within him that made life different.

Men like Prof. Skinner cannot take this kind of thing seriously simply because they do not know Christ. There is no way to give a psychological explanation of one being "in Christ." While the idea of an indwelling Christ may not contradict any known truths in psychology, just as true religion never contradicts true science, it goes beyond anything psychology has to offer.

The new world of the Christian makes him no less a citizen of an earthly kingdom. He is indeed a man of two worlds, for he is a servant of men as well as a slave to Christ. He loves the world and desires to make it better through devoted service. He may not be *of* the world, but he is *in* the world. He is a part of it, and in a sense he belongs to it, and yet he is at war with it. When one is "in Christ" his earthly concerns take on an entirely different meaning, for the end of all activity is to glorify God through devotion to Christ. In becoming *dead* to the world (in the sense that its allurements no longer entice him) he who is a part of the new world of Christ is all the more ready to *die* for redemption of the old world

of sin. One is never so much like Christ as when he loves the sinner and passionately longs for his salvation.

Paul writes along these lines to the Galatians. “I have been put to death with Christ on his cross, so that it is no longer I who live, but it is Christ who lives in me” (2:20). He further says to them: “I will boast only in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ; for by means of his cross the world is dead to me, and I am dead to the world” (6:14). And yet in becoming dead to the world he went on to die in order to help save that world. It is in this context that Paul uses an expression very similar to the title of this series on things that matter most: “It does not matter at all whether or not one is circumcised. What does matter is being a new creature.” (6:15).

The new world is a world of the Spirit-yea, it is a Spirit-producing world. “The Spirit produces love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, humility and self-control” (Gal. 5:22-23). By no power of our own can these qualities be cultivated. They are the fruit of the Spirit-controlled life. Indeed, the new world is life in the Spirit. Rom. 8:5 as rendered in *Good News for Modern Man* makes the point so well: “Those who live as their human nature tells them to live, have their minds controlled by what human nature wants. Those who live as the Spirit tells them to live, have their minds controlled by what the Spirit wants.”

The philosopher Nietzsche talked about how “Man must be surpassed,” and this is what Paul is saying about human nature. While it remains with us and cannot be changed, it can be surpassed by life in the Spirit. It is in this context that Paul solemnly warns: “Those who obey their human nature cannot please God.” Is it not true that we do indeed obey our human nature, which accounts for so much evil among us. We must learn that it is only a mind *controlled* by the Spirit and *living* in the Spirit that surpasses human nature.

The new world is a world of fellowship with all God’s children. When Paul speaks of “the old order” being gone he refers to such things as racial hatred and sectarian prejudice. Faction is a work of the flesh; division and partyism are carnal. This is human nature, not divine nature. When one is motivated by love for Christ he does not see another as a woman, or a Baptist, or a Democrat, or a premillennialist, or a liberal, but as a person for whom Christ died. We could paraphrase 2 Cor. 5:17 to read: “When people are in Christ together, they share a new world together.” There will of course be diversity in that world just as there is diversity in every world. But the point is that men are one in the new world, not because they pass on each other for entrance into it, but because they are called of God into the relationship. We do not choose our brothers in God’s family anymore than we do in our earthly families.

In the new world we grow toward maturity in Christ. The purpose of Christianity is to make us imitators of God, to conform us to His image (Eph. 5:1). The point of it all is “to present every man mature in Christ” (Col. 1:28). Col. 3:9 (GNMM) says it so well: “This

is the new man which God, its creator, is constantly renewing in his own image, to bring you to a full knowledge of himself."

In this new world a man's sense of values undergoes radical transformation. He may continue at his same job, drive the same car, live in the same house, rear the same family, and even read the same books and vacation at the same places, but when one is "in Christ" all such things are seen in a new light. There is no stronger evidence of transformation of character than a change in one's values. It is *motive* that makes the big difference. In the old order the motive is self; in the new order the motive is God's will. The new world is ruled by God. Self is dethroned. This brings about a dramatic change in the things that are important to us.

The beatitudes serve to summarize the change in values that takes place in the new world. The paraphrases of William Barclay are most helpful. "Blessed are the poor in spirit" is explained as "O the bliss of the man who has realized his own utter helplessness, and who has put his whole trust in God, for thus alone he can render to God that perfect obedience which will make him a citizen of the kingdom of heaven."

"Blessed are they that mourn" is given as "O the bliss of the man whose heart is broken for the world's suffering and for his own sin, for out of his sorrow he will find the joy of God."

"Blessed are the meek" is expanded into: "O the bliss of the man who is always angry at the right time and never angry at the wrong time, who has every instinct, and impulse, and passion under control because he himself is God-controlled, who has the humility to realize his own ignorance and his own weakness, for such a man is a king among men."

"Blessed are they who hunger and thirst after righteousness" is rendered as "O the bliss of the man who longs for total righteousness as a starving man longs for food, and a man perishing of thirst longs for water, for that man will be truly satisfied."

When changes in values such as these do not occur we can only conclude that one is not really in the new world of Christ. The presence of Christ in one's life brings about a dramatic change in his desires and ambitions, his affections and his habits. To refer to the psychologists again, they point to the need of an adequate "philosophy of life" in the cultivation of ideal personality. This may be wise thinking for this world, but it is so different from the new world in Christ. It is not a change in "philosophy of life" that makes one a Christian, nor is this even part of it. In the new world Christ is life. Christ cannot be merely an *addition* to one's life, something like ham being added to flavor the beans. He does not merely *inspire* one's life. To be a new creation in Christ means to move into an atmosphere that absorbs the whole of personality.

This is the new humanity, the purpose of God throughout the ages. It is not a philosophy nor a way of life. It is life itself *in Christ.*

This is what Paul is telling us when he says: "It is no longer I that live. It is Christ who lives in me." This is the new world, God's intention for every man.—*the Editor*

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Review of "Voices of Concern" . . . No. 10

SELF-RIGHTEOUS?

JAMES D. BALES

In the reviewer's opinion the best spirit in *Voices of Concern* was manifested by Roy Key. This is due to his spirit in general and the fact that his article was a letter which he wrote to his parents, explaining why he entered the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) . We assure him that we do not "stare with scorn" on so personal a correspondence. His letter is touching in places, and it contains some truth.

Security and Insecurity

He tells of his sense of insecurity as to whether he was saved, even to the extent of having nightmares in which he saw himself lost eternally.

He gives three causes of his insecurity:

1. He was taught that the Gospel of Christ is another law in the same sense as the Law of Moses is law. He was taught that he was saved or lost on the basis of a complete keeping of that law.

I cannot say with certainty why Roy Key grew up with such an unscriptural position. Some few among us, of course, have such a view, and they teach this to others. It is easy to go from one extreme to another, and since the scriptures do teach that the Christian is in some sense under law, some extremists make this mean that law applies to the Christian in the sense that he must do all Christ says and do it all of the time (cf. Gal. 3:10). This cannot be true, for none of us could visualize ourselves saved on judgment day, for we have all sinned.

Or it may be that Key heard preachers who took it for granted that everyone believed in the grace of God, and so they did not stress it, giving their attention to the errors taught by denominationalists. They neglected grace by giving their attention to the "grace only" doctrine. So a generation grew up without an adequate understanding of grace.

As I grew up I did not have the idea that salvation was based on my doing a perfect job of keeping the will of God. Some may have preached that we are saved through perfect obedience, but it is unfair to charge all with having this position. Too, there were many who did not have that sense of security in Christ that we should have. We must realize that nothing *outside* ourselves can snatch us from His hand, and that God guards us. Yet we

must nor become cock-sure and so confident that we grow careless and fall. We are guarded through the power of God *through faith*, and we have a responsibility in keeping the faith.

2. He also explains his insecurity on the idea that brethren knew *what* they believed, but not *whom* they believed.

This may be true of some brethren, but I do not have to go into "another fellowship" because of this. However, the *what* is important because it is related to and grounded in the *who*. If we respect the Commander we must accept the commands. Commands are significant only in that they are related to Christ. A saving knowledge of God involves submission to His will. To say that we know Him, and keep not His commandments, is not really to know Him (1 John 2).

3. He grew up with the idea that one had to be right in everything in order to be saved. One had to know all the truth. Yet he learned that we are wrong on some matters. He concluded that even though he was perfectly right in understanding he knew that he was lost.

If one has to be right in everything, there can be no hope for anyone, for no one knows it all. Even that which we know we do not know as we ought unless we use it in love (1 Cor. 8:1-2). And we can learn from those who are not members of Christ's church, even from atheists. One is not anointed with knowledge simply because he becomes a Christian.

An attitude which I have long heard preached, and that needs to be stressed, is that none of us is right within himself, but the Bible is right, and we should study and measure ourselves in the light of the Bible.

Roy charged that we believe God will not overlook any errors in knowledge, but that He will overlook things in our lives. He says: "A long bitter road has led us to believe that God forgives every kind of error but 'doctrinal' error. What makes us think that He forgives stinginess, lust, character assassination, worldliness, laziness—everything but instrumental music in worship?"

If anyone among us believes this, he is simply wrong. To be sound in doctrine includes being sound in morals. Paul spoke of murder, fornication, profanity, and the like, as being "contrary to sound doctrine" (1 Tim. 1:10).

Now how many among us does Key think really believe anything like that? Yes, some among us live as though they believe such as that, but he is making false witness against the vast majority.

I do not know how much error God will overlook. He must overlook some or none of us will go to heaven. There is a difference between falling into sin and persisting in sin, just as there is a difference between being in Christ and having some error and not coming into Christ at all. It is not necessary for one to believe that an error will send a person to hell in order for him to teach against that error.

Christians and Security

Although it is possible to fall from grace, as the Bible teaches and as some authors in *Voices* demonstrates (and we are saddened by it), the Christian does have some security. Thus he ought to live with confidence, though not with self-righteous cock-sureness. Our security must be grounded in God and His promises. We cannot be saved if salvation is dependent on our merit.

We should feel secure because there is nothing *outside* of us that can take us away from the Savior (John 10:28). We are guarded by the power of God through faith for a salvation that will be revealed in the last time (1 Peter 1:5).

If one were justified by merit by doing all God says and doing it all the time, he could boast of his work and would receive his reward as wages earned (Rom. 3), but no one has done this. Faith is not able to render perfect obedience, for faith itself is imperfect. Yet it is faith that brings us into the benefits of Christ. Faith functions, but never perfectly. We must trust God, not ourselves, for salvation. Faith itself has no power to save, however strong it may be. It saves because it is faith in the Savior. Neither do confession or baptism have power within themselves. They are God's way of making men righteous, and they are related to the death, burial and resurrection of Christ. In all these things our trust is in Christ and His cleansing blood.

We can have security since we are continually cleansed by the blood of Jesus (1 John 1:6-7). This passage does not mean that we live perfectly, for John goes on to say that we are self-deceived if we deny that we sin (1 John 2:1-2). This does not mean that we are to take sin lightly, for he goes on to emphasize that we must keep the word of God (1 John 2:3-6) . While those who walk in the light do sin from time to time, their manner of *life* is not to be a sinful *life*. They do not *dwell* in darkness even though they sometimes sin, for their intention is to do God's will even when they sometimes fail.

We are, therefore, continually under the blood of Jesus, which provides a continual cleansing process. I cannot trust in myself, for faith must be a clinging to Christ for salvation.

Are Christians Under Law?

Key does not deny that in some sense the Christian is under law. We are not under law in that we must earn our salvation through always doing all the will of God (Gal. 3:10). But if we are under law in no sense at all, it would mean that we have no obligation at all to do the will of God. If we are under law in no sense, it would not be possible for us to do any wrong, for sin is a transgression of law (1 John 3:4). If there is no law for the Christian, then there is nothing that says he must love God or neighbor, and there are no prohibitions against theft, murder or adultery, or anything else. Many passages make it

clear that law does in some sense apply to us, such as Matt. 28:20; Acts 2:36, Luke 6:46, I Cor. 9:21, Heb. 8:10.

Self-Righteous Pharisees

In a lapse of charity and in unfair judgment, Key accuses us of being self-righteous like the Pharisees. Rather than being offended at this I am grieved that he made so blanket an accusation. When he gives this further reflection he may change his mind.

Undoubtedly there are Pharisees among us, but not all of us are, and one would have to know a lot about a person before he makes so serious a charge. Phariseeism is one of those dangers that has always threatened the people of God, and one that I have warned against in a forthcoming book, *Woe Unto You.* One can be proud about having more knowledge than someone else, or he can be self-righteous about not being a Pharisee! Each of us must examine himself in the light of God's word lest he trusts in himself as righteous while setting all others at naught.

One is not trusting in himself, however, when he contends that there are conditions to salvation, or when he opposes what he believes to be wrong. But we are not saying that Key defines Phariseeism this way. My attitude toward Key is one of goodwill and personal friendliness. I pray the Lord will have mercy on him and on me also.—*Harding College, Searcy, Ark.*

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FRESH WINDS OF GOD

ROY KEY

Brother James Bales' comments on my "Letter to Mother and Daddy" were gracious. To read them was to rejoice in the awareness that someone is opening the windows to let the breath of God blow in. I appreciate the evident spirit of good will and grace even to forgive.

I would not try to refute the commentary. Much of it is what I preached and still preach. I am grateful that Bales is not called to pay as high a price for saying it as others of us had to pay.

To three particular comments I respond. First, Bales implies that the narrow, sectarian background in which I was nurtured is not at all typical, but is the unfortunate exception to the happy rule. We generalize from our own experience. My letter was penned after forty-two years' observation, twenty of them from the pulpit. I am about the same age as Bales, a graduate of two of our best schools (Lipscomb and Pepperdine), contributed to ten different publications, and served in the South, West, Northeast and Midwest.

Bales tends to look with paternal spirit on my experience, while I must conclude that he grew up in a privileged area. Also, I conclude that conditions have over the years improved, and that improvement is now accelerated. That he was able to do what others of us in other situations could do only at the peril of ostracism is a matter which he is hardly in position to understand. But I assure him and you that it is for me a matter of rejoicing and thanksgiving.

Second, Bales affirms, "In a lapse of charity and in a manifestation of unfair judgment, Key accuses us of being self-righteous, like the Pharisees (pp. 122-123)." He calls it a "blanket . . . accusation" and "wholesale charge." If that is the message my words convey, I apologize. I did not mean them so. I have not to this day meant to stand aside from "the self-righteous" and thunder judgment.

Such expressions as "we generally" and "many of our brethren" were intended as qualifying phrases introducing my discussion. The difference between us, as I see it, though, is that while we both know "self-righteousness" has been around, Bales believes it has not been characteristic of the mainstream Brotherhood life, and I believe it has been there as big as day for any who have eyes to see.

Let my comments about "*self*-righteousness" be studied in the light of a single question: What is the ground of our hope? You will see that my contention is that our people have, by and large, rested their confidence on their right understanding of and compliance with a select number of doctrinal commands.

Ultimately our security lay in our "rightness" about these "essentials." As pride in our cardinal sin, so self-justification is our prime temptation. This is our common condition in a world of sin. And note how subtly temptation can rear its head at the very moment we are discussing salvation through *Christ,* security not in our own *knowledge,* but in *Him* on Whom we with perpetual penitence trust. Bales says,

> An attitude which I have long heard preached, and which needs to be stressed, is that none of us is right within himself, but the Bible is right, and we should study and measure ourselves in the light of the Bible.

The assumption, unstated but plain, is that when I have conformed myself to the Bible, then I am right. This, however, is not the Gospel. The "righteousness of faith" is a "rightness" God *gives* us (imputes, accounts, reckons) when we are clearly in the *wrong* as measured by the Bible. This "Good News" is for us who have failed and are not "right" in ourselves, but God accepts us for nothing but the willingness to be accepted.

It is "the scandal" of affirming, "But if without any works to his credit (one) simply puts his faith in him who acquits the guilty, then his faith is indeed 'counted as righteousness'." (Rom. 4:5, TEV).

Paul left himself wide open to misunderstanding. So had Jesus. So will everyone who preaches the same Gospel. We dare not disparage the Bible. We must know *about* our Lord in order to know *Him.* But somewhere, sometime we must face this truth: *so long as my trust is in measuring myself by the Bible well enough to fulfill its requirements for salvation, it is grounded in SELF and not in CHRIST!*

Unless my confidence is in the "rightness" of Christ, not my fulfillment of God's requirements, however "right" and however "right" the Bible which details them, *I have fallen away from grace!* I conclude unequivocally that any view which rests on *my* "rightness"—intellectually, ethically, legally—is destructive of the Gospel and is in reality a doctrine of "*self*-righteousness."

Only when I quit pleading my rightness about anything as the ground of my standing before God do I turn away from justification by works to salvation through faith. Then at last I simply hurl myself upon the mercy of Christ. Until then I have not given up every ground of boasting and every occasion for pride.

My attempt here has been to make clear my usage of the term "*self*-righteousness." I employ it with care and intended precision, not as a sanctified curse-word to hurl at others. Nor do I limit it to a few. The sin is universal. Brother Bales does well to warn against it, for when we feel most free from it, we may be most ensnared. There is never a moment when we do not stand before God through sheer mercy.

Third, Bales indicates that there was no need to change fellowships to find freedom to live and work. I confess that had I been a better Christian, I would doubtless have done many things differently. All I can say is that given who I was, where I was, the particular circumstances, and the demands of Christian discipleship, I could not do otherwise. Looking back over seven years, I still do not see how I could do differently.

There is but one Church of Jesus Christ. I did not leave it, nor have I any intention of leaving. Through the years one must choose *where* in the Church he is called to serve. In any move I always seek the will of God as best I can discern it. And here is the procedure I use: study of Scripture, seeking counsel of the best and wisest people at hand, discerning the movement of events and pressure of circumstance, and wrestling the whole matter through in prayer. In it all I try to use the best sense I have been given.

Through such a procedure there came a moment when the climatic decision of Paul spoke to me. He was a Jew, always a Jew, loving the Jews and wanting to work with them and for them, giving to them all that he had. Yet, with a knife thrust in his heart, he finally had to say, "Lo, I turn to the Gentiles!"

He did not mean, "I withdrew fellowship from you and no longer consider you my people." No! He meant, "Since you will not let me work with you, I am compelled to go to people who will receive me." He did not quit loving them or praying for them or even working for them wherever he could. And I have tried to follow the same course.

For the communion that nourished me I am grateful. To the friends with whom I studied and worked and played and prayed, my heart is still open and my hand extended. I pledge myself even now to do all I know to bridge the gulf, except to alter the Gospel and compromise the Saviorhood of Christ.

I conclude with the closing words of Brother Bales, changing only my name for his. "My attitude toward Bales is one of good will and personal friendliness. I pray the Lord will have mercy on him, and on me also." And I thrill to remember a promise that begins, "Whenever two of you on earth agree about anything you pray for . . . !" (Matt. 18:19, TEV).—*First Christian Church, Sixth and Clark Streets, Ames, Iowa 50010.*

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SHOT FROM GUNS

SEEDA SUDO NIM, Ph.D.

Editor's Note: For the time being at least this able and well known Church of Christ leader chooses to remain anonymous, so he is assuming a *nom de plume.* You may expect more from him. We will only say that he is indeed a Ph.D., if that means anything.

While I was visiting recently with a beloved and well. known Far Eastern missionary, a man famous for his benevolent spirit and magnanimity, I was obliged to excuse my host for a few moments, inasmuch as he desired to fix us a lemonade (he called it a "Singapore Citrus"), the flaming orb of heaven being at its zenith. Awaiting the good man's repast my eyes chanced to light on his venerable Bible, frayed at the edges from long and consecrated usage. To my astonishment I discovered that one of the pages from the Gospel of Matthew had been torn Out, or perhaps it had literally fallen away from ceaseless turning, and a new page had been inserted. The altered Matthew text, which I found myself reading, sent my senses reeling (had the good missionary written it in the grip of some unaccountably demonic impulse? had Satan himself placed it there?), and I reproduce it here below for the instruction, and, more likely, the bewilderment, of those more qualified than I to judge:

> As they reached the coast of Caesarea Philippi, the Master took hold of Irascible Rice's hand and said unto him, "Upon this rock I will build my church!"
>
> "Upon me, Lord? But, Lord, I am a vain man, I suffer from a severe case of megalomania, I am carnal-minded, envious in the extreme, and constitutionally misanthropic. Not only that, but I think of my-self as the grand inquisitor, I have a persecution complex, and I am glibly ignorant."

"This testimony is true," said the Master. "Nevertheless, I will give unto thee the Keys of the Kingdom. Here, take them."

"Oh, thank you, Lord," said Irascible, delightedly. "I'd rather have these than anything!"

"And I say unto thee that thy name is no longer Irascible, but henceforth thy name shall be called Firey. Whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven and whomsoever thou shalt proscribe on earth shall be proscribed in heaven."

"Boy, oh, boy!," said Firey Rice, gleefully. "Do you really mean it, Lord?"

"Of course, I do," replied the Master, benignly.

"Well, in that case, Lord," responded Firey Rice, somewhat sternly, as he reached into his tunic and drew forth a parchment, "in that case, fill out this questionaire." Firey had whipped out a questionnaire with what looked to be one hundred or so questions on it.

"Fill out what!?"

"Fill out this questionnaire and be quick about it. It seems to me you're a little soft on (1) keeping the Sabbath day holy, (2) total abstinence, (3) people who cast out demons without using your name, and (4) Samaritanism."

"Once again," said the Master, sadly, "I change your name. From henceforth you shall be called Puft. As long as you live and even after you die, men shall call you Puft. Whenever men of good will shall gather they shall refer to you as Puft Rice."

"Maybe so," retorted Puft Rice, undismayed, "but, just the same, fill out that questionnaire. I'm gathering material for my new book called *Burning Down The Forest."*

Note: Seeda Sudo Nim is the minister of the church in Holdenville, South Dakota. He left Korea during the war and received most of his education in the states. He attended Freed-Hardeman, Harding, David Lipscomb and Abilene Christian College and he holds the Ph.D. degree from Paris' famed Wellington University. The subject of brother Nim's dissertation was "The Effect of the Far Eastern Sun on Occidental Visitors and an Explanation of the Resultant Overcompensation of the Comic Capacity in Occasional Albeit Spectacular Instances." Brother Nim specializes in bucolic stories such as the foregoing. His stories are obviously fanciful and have no basis in fact or actual events or real people. "I only write," he has said on numerous occasions, "in order to distract people from the hustle and bustle of this modern age."

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BOOK NOTES

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